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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

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**WORKING FOR THE ENEMY:
ARE THE EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR IRAQIS UNDER
US OCCUPATION TODAY THE SAME AS FORCED CONSCRIPTION
OF DUTCH CITIZENS BY THE NAZIS DURING WORLD WAR II?**

by

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Abstract

The invasion of Iraq has presented the United States with the unanticipated challenge of reconstructing a failed state. In particular, labor policies have been especially important to the United States' conduct of its occupation. Similarly, the Germans had to determine labor policies for the people of the Netherlands during their occupation in World War II. For the Dutch, the German policy of conscription served as a clear case of being forced to work for the enemy. For the Iraqis, there are few options other than to work for the US or the US-installed central government. By not providing alternative employment options, has the US essentially "conscripted" Iraqis to work for the enemy?

This paper will review these two cases, the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during World War II and the US occupation of Iraqi since 2003, and compare the central factors to consider when determining labor policies during an occupation. Although separated in time and location, both the US and Nazi Germany found that their labor policies would have a powerful effect on the occupied peoples. The compelling parallels between the two cases highlight issues that could be central to any nation occupying another. It is essential that the occupiers have a detailed understanding of the society that they wish to control. It is essential that occupiers understand the complex emotions and perceptions of the occupied people. Finally, it is essential that the occupying nation understand the underlying framework for the existing administration and the effects of its policies on that administration. With these facets in mind, an occupying country can better develop and implement labor policies that will help ensure success for both the occupier and the people of the occupied nation.

Introduction

The Netherlands was under German occupation for a majority of World War II. In a clear case of being forced to work for the enemy, thousands of Dutch citizens were conscripted to provide forced labor for the Nazis in factories in Germany. Similarly, Dutch industries were co-opted by the Nazis to supply war material to the Germany military. With these industries still functioning, most Dutch were able to maintain their employment. The same is true for the Dutch central government. The Nazis elected to install their own leadership in the Dutch government, but the lower levels of the Dutch bureaucracy remained intact. In these cases, could the Dutch still be considered to be working for the enemy?

In the case of Iraq, the United States faces a tumultuous reconstruction effort. One of the cornerstones to re-enable society and a central government is a functioning economy. At the center of this effort is the ability for citizens to find sufficient employment to provide for their families. However, there are few employment options in Iraq outside of working for the US or the Government of Iraq (GoI). Unfortunately, for the radical elements in Iraqi society, being employed by the US or the US-installed Iraqi government is equivalent to collaboration. Without other viable options, are the Iraqis employed by the US or the GoI also working for the enemy?

How could the Germans and the US have better handled their labor policies during their respective occupations? The Germans and the Dutch share a border and an ethnicity. Certainly, the Germans could have better anticipated the potential areas of post-invasion difficulties. Similarly, the US had been focused on the Middle East generally and the nation of Iraq

specifically since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Certainly, the US could have better anticipated the potential areas of its post-invasion difficulties.

Although separated in time and location, both the US and Nazi Germany found that their labor policies would have a powerful effect on the occupied peoples of Iraq and the Netherlands. The compelling parallels between the two cases highlight issues that could be central to any nation occupying another. This paper will review the two examples of occupation in turn and compare the two cases to determine the central factors to consider when planning labor policies for an occupation. The goal is that by better understanding the labor policies pursued by the Germans and the US in these two cases, nations can better understand the ramifications of their policies in future occupations.



Occupation of the Netherlands

On May 10, 1940, Germany commenced its surprise attack on the Netherlands. The next five days would find the Dutch royal family and government leadership evacuated to England, the center of several large cities decimated by German bombers, the Dutch army in full retreat, and, finally, capitulation to the Germans. For the next five years, Dutch citizens would have to determine the best way to navigate through a world that they did not recognize: food shortages, flooding, extreme cold, German anti-Semitic policies, curfews, rationing, police brutality, and the death of over 200,000 Dutch citizens.¹ The story of their occupation illustrates lessons for any nation that occupies another.

The initial occupation of the Netherlands was something of a “wait and see.” After capitulation, the Dutch found themselves occupied by a foreign nation that espoused that the Dutch were “akin in blood to the German nation” and that Germany had invaded a “sister-nation” to prevent it from falling into foreign hands.² The remaining Dutch administration was convinced that the war was over and that the Netherlands would be incorporated into a larger German economic and political sphere.³ For many, the “Germans did not seem too objectionable” and day-to-day life remained much as it had before the war.⁴ Personal relationships between the Dutch and the Germans remained relatively good. Intimate relationships between German soldiers and Dutch citizens were encouraged by the Third Reich due to the belief that the Dutch were “considered Aryans and part of the Germanic race” and resulted in the birth of approximately 12,000 – 16,000 children with mixed Dutch-German parentage during the course of the war.⁵

However, almost immediately upon capitulation, Germany implemented policies that would prove that life had indeed changed for the Dutch. First, German administrators started a food rationing system on the Dutch population. Dependent primarily on this rationed food supply, caloric intakes were not sufficient to maintain a healthy population and the restrictions on access to food increased even further as the war progressed.⁶ Inadequate food resulted in a weakened population that encouraged the spread of contagious diseases. For example, from 1939 to 1943, the percentage of death from consumption increased from 4.1% to 7.6%.⁷ A combination of undernourishment and increased lethality of infectious diseases resulted in the deaths of over 23,000 Dutch citizens (in a population of approximately 8 million) during the “Hunger Winter” of 1944-45.⁸

In addition to rationing, the Dutch had to contend with the needs of the German war industry. The ample supplies within the Dutch economy, specifically of gold, copper, bicycles, and clothes, were primary targets for requisition.⁹ But, the German industry quickly included items such as tramcars, boats, foot gear, Swedish and Portuguese securities, and even dogs in their requirements.¹⁰ (See Figure 1) As the war progressed, the labor of the Dutch male population would also be requisitioned to supply the German war industry.



Figure 1: Dutch propaganda drawing of materials provided to Germany

In addition to the hardships of hunger and deprivation, the Germans began the political process of Nazification of the Netherlands. Although stating in the first speech by the Reich Commissioner for the Netherlands that the purpose of the German occupation was not to “thrust [the German] political creed upon them,” the Dutch soon found themselves under pressure to embrace the tenets of the National Socialist party.¹¹ With the German intent to assimilate the Dutch becoming evident, resistance by the Dutch started as a “symbolic resistance” to include such gestures as increased membership in the Netherlands Union (a Dutch organization with “anti-Nazi sentiment”) and prominent display of pictures of the Dutch royal family and of Dutch flags.¹² As the Nazis continued to impose their institutions on the Dutch populace, a majority of the population tended to become “increasingly antagonistic” towards their occupiers.¹³ The result of Nazi crack-downs was that the more overt methods of “symbolic resistance” were reduced and more passive methods such as using special greetings to each other with symbolic,

anti-Nazi meanings, planting flower beds with the colors of the Dutch flag, and naming children after members of the Dutch royal family emerged.¹⁴ Radio programs from England, such as Radio-Oranje, and underground newspapers provided “courage and lifted up [the] tired spirits” of the Dutch.¹⁵ As discussed by Leesha Rose, a Jewish resistance worker in the occupied Netherlands, “the harder the barbaric Nazi fist pounded at the suffering victims, the more determined the Dutch became in their solidarity and inventiveness.”¹⁶ This “determined” resistance would continue to increase as the war progressed and the issue of forced labor would become one of the central issues driving the various Dutch resistance movements.¹⁷

Dutch labor was one of the first commodities taken by the Germans in their occupation of the Netherlands. Although a history of cross-border work existed prior to the war, occupation brought a change in the application of this relationship.¹⁸ Until 1942, Germany relied primarily on “voluntary” labor through inducements such as “good wages and working conditions” as well as a denial of unemployment insurance for Dutch working-age males if employment was available in Germany.¹⁹ A revised labor policy was implemented in 1942 as the Germans realized that the war would be more prolonged than expected.²⁰ This policy relied on administrative actions by the German-controlled State Labor Office (SLO) to enforce legal obligations of corporations and individuals.²¹ Requiring individuals to register with the SLO in order to receive rationing cards and requiring corporations to apply for a license from the SLO before hiring Dutch labor ensured that the Germans could control the Dutch labor force and provide German industries with sufficient labor.²² By September 1944, increased German requirements drove another change in labor policy. Germany turned to police rather than administrative actions to supply Dutch men for labor.²³ Dubbed “slave hunting in modern times,” this included massive raids as well as taking hostages to force Dutch to work for the

Germans.²⁴ For example, in November 1944, German police and army units swept through Rotterdam and captured 54,000 of a working-age male population of 60,000 to 70,000.²⁵ Of these, 40,000 were sent to Germany to forced labor camps and the remaining were used by the Germans to demolish houses, dig trenches, and build fortifications in the Netherlands.²⁶ Although estimates vary, approximately half a million Dutch men (6.25% of the Dutch population) were placed in forced labor camps in Germany and over 8,500 would perish while employed by the Germans.²⁷

Dutch reactions to the German labor policies varied. Many Dutch employers accepted their role in “survival collaboration:” by taking on German contracts, Dutch employers were able to keep their businesses open and could try and keep as many Dutch men employed in the Netherlands as possible.²⁸ This meant that, in effect, “a substantial proportion of the available workforce allowed itself to be employed in support of the war machine of the occupying power.”²⁹ However, as German policies became more draconian, the resistance by the Dutch escalated. A move by Germany to forcefully deport selected shipyard workers from Amsterdam led to a general strike in Amsterdam in February 1941.³⁰ In an “active repudiation of the German regime,” a more general strike followed later in the month in protest against the forced labor policies as well as the German anti-Jewish policies.³¹ As the Germans became more desperate for labor, they implemented a “Reinternment policy” in April, 1943. Germany claimed that Dutch army veterans were actively spreading anti-German sentiment and wanted to punish the veterans by re-interning the 300,000 Dutch soldiers who had surrendered and been furloughed at the beginning of the war.³² The Dutch railed against this new policy as well as the reports of poor working conditions in Germany (to include fleas, poor food, and no protection against Allied bombing).³³ The result was a country-wide strike by half a million Dutch in April and

May 1943.³⁴ This strike has been called a turning point in the Dutch relationship with their German occupiers. Its effect was to curtail Dutch adherence to “survival collaboration” and to increase the number of Dutch citizens exploiting labor exemptions to avoid deportation to Germany.³⁵ Additionally, this led to over 60,000 Dutch men joining the Jews in hiding rather than face the prospect of forced labor in Germany.³⁶

According to Boolean and van der Does, reporters for the Dutch resistance at the time of occupation, the Germans had a window of opportunity to win over the Dutch population upon their initial occupation of the Netherlands.³⁷ However, the opportunity was lost and resistance to German occupation increased as the war continued. There are several important reasons for this. The first was that the German and the Dutch cultures and identities, although superficially similar, were not the same and the Germans failed to recognize the fundamental differences. The second was the failure of the Germans to realize the effects of their reprisals on the average Dutch citizen. Due to acts of the resistance, Germans imposed increasingly harsh punishments on the general population. This drove more citizens to the resistance and increased the number of anti-German acts and started a cycle of reprisals that the Germans were unable to break. The third reason had to do with German policies against the Jews. The Dutch have a history of religious tolerance and the Germans failed to anticipate the powerful impact of their anti-Semitic policies on the Dutch. Closely related was the role of school and religion in Dutch society. The Germans failed to recognize the importance of schools and churches on the average Dutch citizen and failed to control the views espoused by these institutions. Finally, although not something that the Germans in the Netherlands could directly control, Allied success provided an impetus for Dutch resistance. As the Allies started turning the tide of the war, the tide of the resistance in the Netherlands rose with their success.

The Germans entered the Netherlands with the idea that the Dutch would accept and willingly accommodate rule by a neighboring people. With a superficially similar language and culture, the Germans can be forgiven on this point. However, as they began to implement the policies of National Socialism, the support that they expected in the Dutch population did not materialize.³⁸ The concepts espoused by the German National Socialists were not found in the “historical roots” of the Netherlands.³⁹ Implementation of Nazi policies through the Dutch wing of the National Socialist party was seen as a forceful attempt to redefine Dutch government through a German puppet regime.⁴⁰ A similar issue was encountered in the forced labor policies. A majority of the Dutch citizens were willing to find employment to provide for their own personal safety even if that ultimately served the needs of the German war industry. But, as German policies were implemented that threatened the security of a Dutch national identity (such as having all pictures of the Dutch royal family removed, preventing display of the Dutch flag, etc.) Dutch citizens were more inclined to actively resist employment with any company that supported the Germans.⁴¹ Resistance became a measure of self-respect and a way to fight for the preservation of the Dutch identity. As Boolean and van der Does point out, “The Germans displayed a total lack of insight in the mentality of the Dutch and this caused a growing resistance.”⁴² By recognizing the differences in the national identities of the two countries, Germany could have better anticipated how to control those differences.

The second issue that prevented a successful occupation for Germany was the cycle of escalating reprisals.⁴³ Germany took several important steps at the beginning of their occupation that had the potential for a successful occupation. Since the Germans maintained the existing Dutch administration, had a “conciliatory tone” in their early policies, and imposed strict discipline on the behavior of the occupation troops, normalcy was increased for the Dutch and

tensions between the Dutch and the Germans were minimized.⁴⁴ However, the cycle of reprisals began with the February 1941 strike. In order to break the strike, the Germans executed several of the key players. Although there were no reprisals against the wider Dutch population, the executions of Dutch citizens came as a shock and sent more citizens to active involvement in the resistance.⁴⁵ With increased resistance came more German reprisals such as mass executions, the attempted reinternment of Dutch veterans, and increased labor deportations.⁴⁶ Enactment of a German policy to allow for a nearly unlimited application of the death penalty was repugnant to the Dutch.⁴⁷ Increased hardships imposed on the Dutch populations such as the flooding of farmlands as a defensive measure further alienated the Dutch and drove them to the resistance.⁴⁸ As Boolean and van der Does explained, the Dutch resistance “showed that an orderly nation prefers chaos to loss of honour[sic] and humiliation”⁴⁹ All told, over 30,000 Dutch would die challenging the German occupation.⁵⁰

The Dutch response to the anti-Semitic policies was not anticipated by the Germans.⁵¹ The Netherlands, due to a historical need to incorporate various religious groups within its boundaries, has a long-standing “principle of religious toleration.”⁵² This principle came to include the approximately 140,000 Jews living in the Netherlands at the capitulation to Germany.⁵³ As the war progressed, German policies became increasing anti-Semitic and repugnant to the Dutch. The February 1941 strike was partially in response to the injustices being imposed on the Jewish population.⁵⁴ The anti-Semitic policies were counter to the ideals of religious tolerance and were seen as a challenge to the principles of the Dutch national identity.⁵⁵ It was not so much that the Germans were targeting the Jews specifically that raised the ire of the Dutch; it was that they would threaten a principle of what defined the Dutch identity.

In a similar vein, churches and schools would prove to be stalwarts against the Germans throughout the occupation. Religion and education held powerful positions in Dutch life, which the Germans failed to understand.⁵⁶ Calvinist and Catholic churches were active participants in the resistance due to a rejection of Nazi “godlessness.”⁵⁷ Other churches conveyed to their congregations their “opposition to Nazi ideology” through prayers, hymns, and sermons.⁵⁸ Religious leaders boldly confronted the Germans throughout the war on their treatment of the Jews, the Dutch citizens more generally, and their impositions on the freedoms of “justice, charity, and...consciousness.”⁵⁹ The Germans did not know how to effectively counter the influence of the church. Although approximately 100 ministers and priests were executed by the Germans, the Germans feared the powerful worldwide influence of institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church and resisted confronting churches head-on.⁶⁰ The situation in the universities was much the same. Although the Germans sought to utilize the classrooms as propaganda tools by controlling the textbooks and the lessons plans, many teachers effectively protested by simply not teaching at all.⁶¹ For example, Leiden University, under pressure to conform to German policies by changing its curriculum, replacing its textbooks, and denying Jewish teachers employment, chose to close for the remainder of the war in protest. “It chose not to function at all rather than to become untrue to the principles of the university that were adopted at her founding in 1573.”⁶² This could be said of many of the learning institutions of the Netherlands. For the schools and churches, abandoning their principles was simply not an option and no amount of German coercion would change their stance.

Finally, the role of the Allies as a moral boost for the Dutch was not anticipated by the Germans.⁶³ Propaganda tools such as Radio-Oranje and the various underground news papers were essential for keeping the Dutch informed of the Allied war effort.⁶⁴ With news of Allied

success came increased resistance to the German occupation. For example, Allied successes in 1943, such as the German surrender at Stalingrad, increased American aerial bombardment of Germany, and the success of the Allied troops in North Africa provided hope for the Dutch population and motivation for the April-May 1943 general strike.⁶⁵ The Germans attempted to curtail these motivations by using Dutch civilian deaths due to Allied bombing raids as propaganda. This largely fell on deaf ears as the Dutch were willing to accept civilian deaths and Allied bombing of major cities as Rotterdam and Middelburg in order to secure the defeat of the Axis powers.⁶⁶

The German occupation of the Netherlands was ultimately a failure. For five years, the Dutch were forced to deal with food deprivation, systemic theft, and heinous forced labor policies. The Germans were not able to successfully assimilate the Dutch into a broader Germany for several reasons: failure to anticipate the significant differences between the national identities and cultures of Germany and the Netherlands; failure to understand the ramifications of an escalating cycle of reprisals; failure to understand the central role of religious tolerance and the institutions of the church and education in Dutch society; and, the powerful impact of Allied success on the Dutch will to resist. Had Germany been able to better understand the implications that these factors would play on their ability to control the occupied country of the Netherlands, the Third Reich may have re-thought its policies on such issues as forced labor.

Occupation of Iraq

The United States invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003 in an effort to replace Saddam Hussein's regime and prevent Iraq from supplying Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) to terrorist organizations. Pre-invasion expectations of the American arrival were quickly shattered as the Iraqi citizens did not cheer the invading forces as liberators, inspectors did not find evidence of WMDs, and the Iraqi army did not surrender in mass as expected.⁶⁷ Instead, the United States and its allies were faced with an invasion bogged down by the unexpected opposition of the *Fedayeen Saddam* and the chaos of occupying a nation with no functioning state administration or government.⁶⁸ In an attempt to quickly replace the existing government, Paul Bremer, as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, implemented two policies that would drive the nation further into chaos. With CPA Orders 1 & 2, Bremer disbanded the Iraqi Army and Iraqi intelligence agencies and removed any one associated with the Ba'ath Party, Saddam Hussein's ruling party, from government.⁶⁹ With these two pillars of the society removed, the remaining fabric of the nation crumbled as the average Iraqi found themselves with no employment, no future prospects, and little to no essential services.⁷⁰ Had the United States better understood Iraq and its society, better conducted its pre-war planning, and been flexible enough to create needed opportunities for Iraqis once the occupation began, the US could have developed a labor policy that would have been more conducive to quickly establishing a legitimate Iraqi government and restoring Iraq to its people.

The dire post-war labor situation began with a failure to adequately understand the state of Iraq prior to the invasion. The US assumed that it could easily replace Saddam Hussein's regime and conduct a "rolling transition" of control from the Coalition to a quickly reconstituted central Iraqi government.⁷¹ Due to poor intelligence and faulty assumptions, the US failed to

understand that the country of Iraq was already poorly governed prior to the invasion. From the various wars waged by the Hussein regime (i.e. Iran-Iraq War, Invasion of Kuwait / Gulf War) to the effects of the United Nations embargos, the central government of Iraq was already in shambles. As noted by Ali Allawi (who served as Minister of Trade and Minister of Defense in the Interim Iraq Governing Council following the invasion), “The state had, in effect, withdrawn from the detailed management of the country, except in a few vital areas necessary for the immediate survival and continuation of the regime.”⁷² This left the United States without a strong central government on which to base its occupation.

Additionally, the massive exodus of middle-class Iraqi professionals in the 1990’s left the country with an administration reliant on political cronyism and less-than-capable individuals and eliminated a pool of well-qualified, indigenous expertise to draw from to rebuild the country after the invasion.⁷³ Although significant numbers of the Iraqi exile population would return to Iraq after the war and serve as a powerful force in rebuilding Iraq, their distance from the conditions in the country prior to the invasion did not prepare them for the magnitude of their task. This situation, coupled with 30-50% unemployment prior to the war, did not leave a strong financial framework on which to recreate the economy of Iraq after the invasion.⁷⁴

The United States failed to understand that Iraq was rife with tribal, ethnic, and sectarian issues that were barely restrained by the thin veil of Iraqi nationalism imposed by Hussein’s regime.⁷⁵ As highlighted by an interpreter employed by the US government, “When the Americans came here, they didn’t know anything about this country: the culture, the streets, and how to deal with Iraqis.”⁷⁶ These conditions would come to play an important role in the powerful reaction of the various anti-occupation groups against those who chose to seek employment with the United States’ forces after the invasion.

The US failed to understand the role of the Ba'ath party in the Iraqi government. For many Iraqis, their membership in the Ba'ath party had either been coerced or served as a method to negotiate the hardships imposed during the United Nations embargoes.⁷⁷ For example, one Iraqi recounted how a local, well-established doctor had been removed by the US because he was "Ba'athist" even though had only used his membership as a way to get access to facilities and medicines that wouldn't have been available to him because of the United Nation embargos.⁷⁸ The central government of Iraq was dependent upon members of the Ba'ath Party for the day-to-day governance of the nation. The Party functioned as the "administrative glue" of Iraq to keep the government functioning.⁷⁹ However, after the invasion, the CPA pursued a policy similar to the de-Nazification of Germany and removed or arrested anyone with ties to the Ba'ath Party regardless of their rank in the organization.⁸⁰ This served to further decimate any remnants of a central government and crushed the ability of Iraq to regulate its own economy. Once the effects of this policy had been recognized, the CPA attempted to rebuild the Iraqi government without a way to vet potential new appointees; it was more important to the CPA that the individual not be a member of the Ba'ath party than that the individual be qualified or utilize their position for criminal activities.⁸¹ This lack of insight into the role of the Ba'ath Party would further hinder the ability of Iraq to create a self-sustaining economy and provide for its own citizens.

Finally, the US failed to understand the powerful pride of the Iraqi people. Iraq had been a regional power in the Middle East until the long Iran-Iraq war. That war, the punishing foray into Kuwait, the insulting UN embargos, and the invasion by the United States had damaged the spirit of the Iraqi people. "Saddam's tyranny destroyed much of that pride and what was left was dealt a blow by the realization that it had taken a foreign power to liberate them."⁸² After the invasion, US-run checkpoints would be the most visible reminder of this blow to their pride.⁸³

In combination, an inability to find work and provide for their families, a lack of essential services such as water and electricity, and the painful humiliation of US-run checkpoints would be a powerful motivator to resist support for the occupation forces. The despair is evident in the words of a Baghdad municipal employee who said, “There’s hunger everywhere....It’s only promises. No action.”⁸⁴ Had the US better understood the various factors in play in Iraq before the invasion, it could have better anticipated the implications of its policies on the Iraqi citizens.

In terms of pre-war planning, the United States did a poor job of anticipating the need to conduct an occupation. Rather, the United States insisted that it was invading Iraq to liberate its people and would not serve as occupiers. This planning oversight may be due to the disjointed nature of the pre-war planning. For example, the United States relied on three different groups to conduct pre-war planning: State Department, Department of Defense, and various Iraqi exile groups (most notably, the Iraqi National Congress).⁸⁵ As noted by Allawi, pre-war planning “was mired in ineptitude, poor organization, and indifference.”⁸⁶ As a result, there was no overarching organization to keep pre-war planning focused. Instead, the various groups conducting planning were able to squander the opportunity to build a cohesive post-invasion reconstruction effort for Iraq. For example, the Iraqi exile groups tended to concentrate their debates on post-war political power struggles and not on the day-to-day tasks of running the country.⁸⁷ US Central Command, as the geographic combatant command responsible for the invasion, did not conduct any planning on the Phase IV (stabilization) part of the operational plan.⁸⁸ Even pre-war congressional testimony about the handover of the government in Iraq illustrated that the Under Secretary of State and the Under Secretary of Defense, as individuals most involved in pre-war planning, had no idea about the functioning of the state of Iraq and weren’t prepared for an occupation.⁸⁹

Within the flawed pre-war planning, the US focused even less specifically on economic issues in a post-war Iraq. “Work on the economy and finances of Iraq had not featured significantly in the pre-war planning at the Pentagon or State Department.”⁹⁰ The United States summarily ignored any of the pre-war reports that demonstrated the potential pitfalls in not considering these areas. For example, the “Future of Iraq” report issued by the exiled Iraqi National Congress highlighted the need for an economic recovery policy and the creation of jobs as a way to mitigate chaos in the post-war environment.⁹¹ Additionally, a study commissioned by the US Army in order to specifically deal with post-invasion reconstruction issues illustrated the potential of an insurgency due to the collapse of the central government and the powerful economic factors on the average Iraqi citizen.⁹² In both cases, the reports were ignored. The United States insisted that its role was as a liberator and not as an occupier, so it was reluctant to do any planning that would involve reforming or administering the Iraqi government.⁹³

Once the United States found itself involved in the administration of Iraq, it failed to respond to the needs of the people. The United States attempted to implement the Iraqi equivalent to the Marshall Plan used in post-World War II Europe. Even though the US would ultimately spend more money per person than that spent in Europe, the US conducted little planning about how the money would be spent. For example, the US did not examine the lessons learned from the application of the Marshall Plan in Europe, did not involve the Iraqis in the development of the plan, spent only a few weeks on its development in contrast to the two years required in Europe, and used inexperienced people for the task.⁹⁴ Even considering that the magnitude of the problems between post-war Iraq and post-war Europe were of vastly different scales, the United States failed to successfully apply what had been a highlight of post-

World War II activities. This was an area that could have positively affected the fortunes of many Iraqis and helped get the nation back on its feet. Instead, the opportunity was squandered.

The United States failed to create the economic situation that could have helped the people of Iraq learn to provide for themselves. Approximately 250,000 men come of age each year in Iraq and begin a search for employment.⁹⁵ The US was not proactive in creating employment for the population, as evidenced in a 2004 Iraqi opinion poll in which 69% of those surveyed rated availability of jobs as very bad or quite bad.⁹⁶ As one Shiite tribal leader pointed out, “If people get a better life, they might forget the past [regime] more easily.”⁹⁷ The US had the opportunity to create the conditions for this better life. Instead, the CPA implemented policies such as CPA Order #2 that dissolved army and intelligence services and created a need for 400,000 more jobs.⁹⁸ (The US had mistakenly planned on a massive surrender of the Iraqi army and anticipated re-structuring the existing force into a police force. This partially drove the decision to decrease the number of US troops required for the invasion.⁹⁹) In this poor economic climate, there were few opportunities for the average Iraqi for jobs. Many turned to working for the US as their only option.

The United States employed approximately 115,000 Iraqis as of March 2008.¹⁰⁰ Of these, approximately 9,000 were interpreters in Iraq and their stories can be used as representative of Iraqis who choose to work for the United States.¹⁰¹ It is important to understand the motivations for these individuals in order to understand the impact of the labor policies of the United States in Iraq. One of the primary motivators for seeking employment with the United States is purely the monetary benefits and the lack of viable alternatives. In 2006, the average estimated Iraqi GDP per capita was \$3,100.¹⁰² The salary for a combat interpreter is an average of \$1,050 per month (as much as \$3,000 per month when working for private organizations such as western

media outlets).¹⁰³ (In contrast, individuals are paid approximately \$100 by militias for each IED set up.¹⁰⁴) Additionally, some private companies such as Titan Corporation (the largest employer of linguists in Iraq) provide a death benefit of \$300-700 per month as a form of life insurance.¹⁰⁵

A desire for US citizenship and a powerful love for their country serve as competing motivators as well. Many interpreters look at their years of service to the United States as a way to help them earn a Green Card for immigration.¹⁰⁶ For example, one interpreter stated that he was working for the US solely in order to help his family escape the chaos of Iraq and find a better life: “I am doing this for my son.”¹⁰⁷ Conversely, many are motivated by a love of country and a restoration of the pride of Iraq. One interpreter said that he decided to work for the US because he felt it was the “best way to help his country.”¹⁰⁸

However, employees that work for the United States find themselves in a precarious position. The perception among the radical elements in Iraq is that those that work for the United States (or the Government of Iraq put in power by the US) are “collaborators with the enemy.”¹⁰⁹ In fact, at the beginning of the occupation, radical newspapers were publishing lists of those working for the United States so that they could be targeted by “death squads.” (These radical newspapers were quickly shut down by the CPA).¹¹⁰ As such, many are forced to wear masks to avoid being recognized and targeted, use aliases, and avoid visiting friends or family.¹¹¹ It is estimated by Iraq Body Count that 9% of the violent civilian deaths in Iraq related to the invasion were conducted by “anti-occupation” forces against those working for the United States.¹¹² For example, from 2003 to January 2007, it is estimated that 257 translators working for a single company, Titan Corporation, were killed due to their associations with the United

States.¹¹³ (It is estimated that Titan Corporation employed approximately 4,000 translators in Iraq in May 2005.)¹¹⁴

Unfortunately, for those employed by the United States there are no insurance plans.¹¹⁵ Besides the death benefit paid by some large corporations, there is little coverage for the families of those who work for the United States. In addition, many US troops still view translators with suspicion and often treat them as “second class citizens in their own country.”¹¹⁶ With no US policy to protect Iraqi employees once the US leaves, those left behind will be forced to find a way to reconcile with the radical elements of the Iraqi society.¹¹⁷ As one translator said to a US soldier, “If you give me a gun, I will fight harder than the Americans. You can go home. I can’t. I have to live in this country.”¹¹⁸

There is hope for the United States to find a path forward and help provide for the people of Iraq. As of 2008, 59% of males ages 15-19 were unemployed.¹¹⁹ However, with security improving there is hope for the return of foreign investment to the country. Big questions remain for foreign investors as to the long-term viability of the country once the US withdraws and have prevented a resurrection of the small businesses and industries needed to revive the Iraqi economy.¹²⁰ Programs such as the Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) have filled this gap temporarily and sparked some small business and industry development. For example, CERP funds were used to rebuild a ceramics factory in Ramadi in order to provide local employment. Using Iraqi funds recovered after the war to restore Iraqi industries helps drive a “return to normalcy” in Iraq.¹²¹ Unfortunately, as of May 2009, by far the largest sector for employment was with the Government of Iraq (2.5 million employees).¹²² With these employees seen by the radical elements in Iraq as collaborators with the US, employment with the GoI may not provide long term stability. A revival in industry is needed to change the

outlook for the populace. For those unable or unwilling to stay in Iraq, the US has increased a Special Immigrant Visa program from 1,000 to 5,000 visas per year to allow US-employed Iraqis to settle in the US.¹²³ In addition, the US is providing Resettlement Benefits for these individuals and their families to provide for housing costs, education, and other associated costs of establishing a new life in America.¹²⁴ Although these policies are many years too late, the US is finally realizing the importance of a comprehensive labor policy to restore stability to the economy of Iraq, restore normalcy to the people of Iraq, and help restore the pride of the nation of Iraq.



Comparison

For both the Germans in the Netherlands and the United States in Iraq, occupation was anticipated to be much easier than actually occurred. The Germans expected to be able to integrate the Low Countries into a wider sphere and simply erase the national boundaries between the countries. The United States anticipated its invasion into Iraq to quickly achieve its goal of regime change and be able to handoff control of the nation to a reconstituted central government. It would serve as a welcome liberator to an oppressed country that would quickly embrace the ideals of a democratic government and a free market economy. However, neither occupation was able to pacify the people and achieve their goals as anticipated. When the people of the Netherlands proved non-compliant with German solicitations for workers, the Germans would resort to forced conscription to provide a labor force for German war industries. The United States would dismantle the central government of Iraq and leave few options for the average Iraqis other than to work for the United States. For these individuals, working for the United States was possibly the only way to provide for their families, but was seen as collaboration by the “anti-occupation” forces. It is important to analyze the labor policies of both nations in order to understand the wider role that these policies had on the success or failure of the occupation.

To begin, it is essential to recognize that both the United State and Nazi Germany had ideologies that served as the singular paradigm through which all the decisions of occupation were made. For Adolf Hitler and Germany, their ideology of Nazism imposed a racial hierarchy on the peoples of the world. Since the Dutch were considered to be of the superior Aryan race, Hitler anticipated that the Dutch and the Germans would share a cultural identity and that the Dutch would willingly allow assimilation into a wider German sphere. Similarly, Hitler sought

to erase the borders of Europe and create a greater Germanic Empire. His ideology drove him to believe that others would understand and appreciate the superiority of the Germanic people and willingly accept incorporation into the larger Germania. In both cases, Hitler would be proved wrong and his policies would foment resentment and resistance in the occupied countries. His dogmatic belief in the ideology of Nazism tainted his ability to anticipate and counter the pragmatic concerns of occupation.

For the United States and its occupation of Iraq, the situation was much the same. This is not to say that Nazism is equivalent to the neo-conservative ideology that was prevalent in President Bush's administration during the invasion of Iraq. However, the dogmatic belief in an ideology and the resulting pragmatic mistakes during the occupation are similar. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States had pursued a grand strategy, "benign in its intent and enlightened in its impact," that encouraged the spread of liberal democracies as the ideal form of government.¹²⁵ Francis Fukuyama, an influential political scientist, helped develop this theory and encouraged the dogmatic adherence resident in the neo-conservatives in control of the Bush administration.¹²⁶ With this powerful ideology in place, the Bush administration was "excessively distrustful of anyone that did not share their views."¹²⁷ According to Fukuyama, whose views on neo-conservatism radically reversed after the invasion of Iraq:

Bureaucratic tribalism exists in all administrations, but it rose to poisonous levels in Bush's first term. Team loyalty trumped open-minded discussion, and was directly responsible for the administration's failure to plan adequately for the period after the end of active combat.¹²⁸

Rajiv Chandrasekaran, an editor for *The Washington Post*, echoed this sentiment when he explained the role envisioned for Ahmad Chalabi, an Iraqi exile, in the post-Saddam government by the Bush administration. In terms of adherence to the Neo-conservatives' ideology,

“Chalabi’s glib talk about creating a secular democracy, one that would embrace the West and recognize Israel, was just what they wanted to hear. He became the neocon’s dream candidate to rule after Saddam was toppled.”¹²⁹ As these examples illustrate, the United States’ dogmatic attachment to the ideology of neo-conservatism would cloud its judgment in post-war planning. Both the US and Nazi Germany would ignore a pragmatic approach to occupation because of their dogmatic belief in an ideology and the inability to counter the paradigm that that ideology presented.

In both cases, the paradigm provided by the invading country’s ideology led to a misguided understanding of the society in which they were attempting to control. The Germans assumed a shared culture would make integration of the Netherlands into a wider German sphere relatively easy. However, even though they shared a border and an ethnic background, the significant differences between the Dutch and German national identities prevented this from happening. For example, the powerful role of education and religion in Dutch culture was not as prevalent in German culture. As such, the Germans failed to plan for the powerful reactions when this part of the Dutch society was targeted.

For the United States, Iraq was a conundrum. Having already been involved in a significant operation against Iraq in the Gulf War in 1991, the United States made several assumptions about its society that would prove detrimental to its subsequent labor policies. The first was the status of the economy prior to the invasion and the stability and strength of the central government to maintain control over the nation and the economy. The US did not anticipate that it would be tasked with recreating a functioning government upon its arrival in Iraq. The second was the surrender of the Iraqi Army and the ability to keep these individuals employed as a police force after the liberation. The US assumed that it could employ this force

effectively after the war and use it to help keep control. The final assumption was the role of the Ba'athists in the central government. The US did not recognize that the Ba'ath party was the conduit through which much of the day-to-day governing occurred. By removing the Ba'athists the remaining structure of the central government was eliminated and the government effectively collapsed.

For both Germany and the United States, the complex emotions and perceptions of an occupied people were underestimated. Although the invasion was justified in the eyes of the occupying country in both cases, the perspective of those subject to rule by a foreign government was not analyzed in depth and the powerful emotions of a proud people occupied by another were not fully understood. Had Germany and the United States understood this reaction better, they could have better implemented policies to mitigate this potential resistance.

In contrast to the US invasion of Iraq, the Germans elected to leave the existing government administration significantly intact. Since the Netherlands had an independent government that was not dependent on a political party, the Germans were able to simply replace the leadership of the various government departments and the administration of the government could continue as it was. The same was the case for the Dutch industries. Although the Germans co-opted large portions of the Dutch industrial base into the larger German war machine, most of the average Dutch were able to stay gainfully employed and the occupation was not significantly disruptive of their abilities to provide for their families.

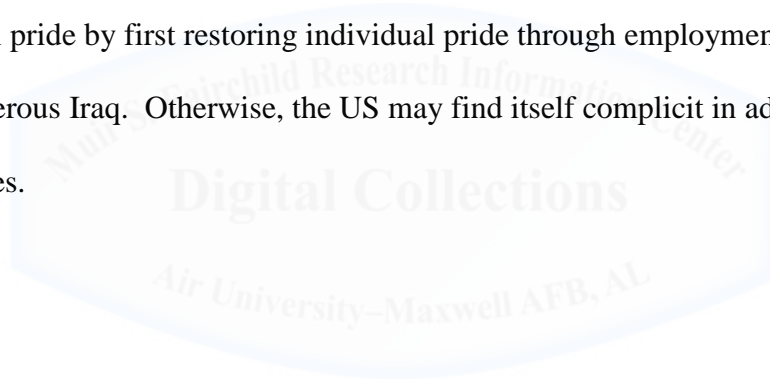
The United States took a different tack in Iraq. With the removal of the Hussein regime as the central aim of the invasion, the US undertook a policy of completely removing any individuals associated with that regime from positions of power. Unfortunately, the Ba'ath Party

provided the framework for the government of Iraq and was heavily integrated into all facets of the government. By removing those with associations to the Ba'ath Party from the government and by dissolving the Iraqi Army, the US essentially dismantled any functioning remnants of the government in addition to adding a significant number to the large pool of unemployed Iraqis. Had the US treated the Ba'ath party members as bureaucrats and not political party members, it could have left the functioning remnants of the central government intact and, in time, investigated complicity of those in power with the repressive policies of Hussein. This could have lent some much needed stability to the nation of Iraq during the critical post-invasion phase.



Conclusions

The implications of the labor policies of the United States in Iraq are still yet to play out. For the Germans, a dogmatic adherence to a flawed ideology, failure to fully understand the significant differences between the national identities of Germany and the Netherlands, failure to understand the second and third order effects of its policies and reprisals, and failure to understand important motivators such as religion, ultimately proved to be its downfall in successfully administering the occupied country of the Netherlands. For the United States, the window of opportunity is rapidly shrinking to change existing policies or implement new ones prior to the anticipated withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. If the US can find a way to restore the Iraqi national pride by first restoring individual pride through employment, there is hope for a stable and prosperous Iraq. Otherwise, the US may find itself complicit in adding Iraq to a long list of failed states.



Appendix

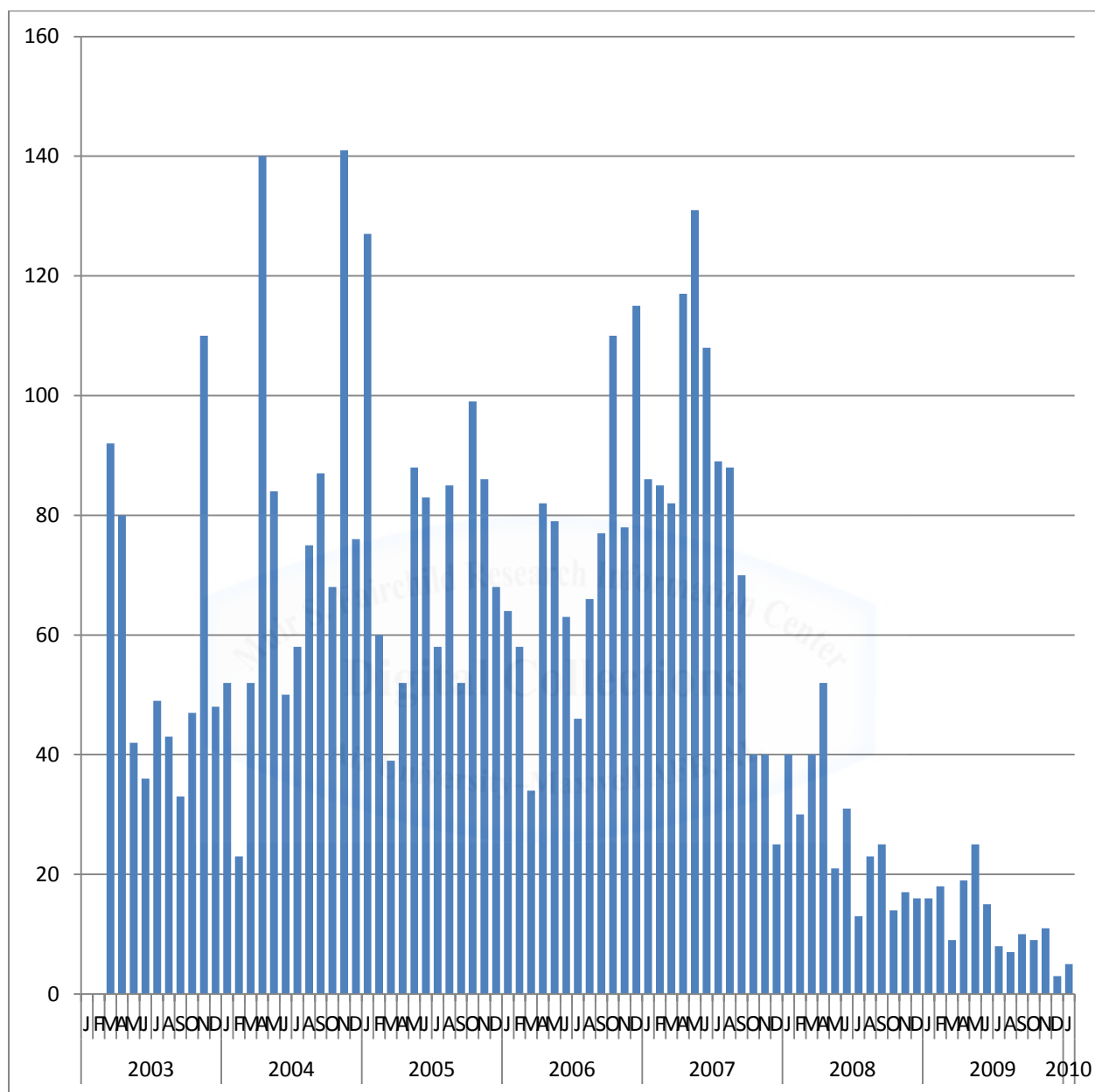


Figure A-1: Coalition Deaths in Iraq

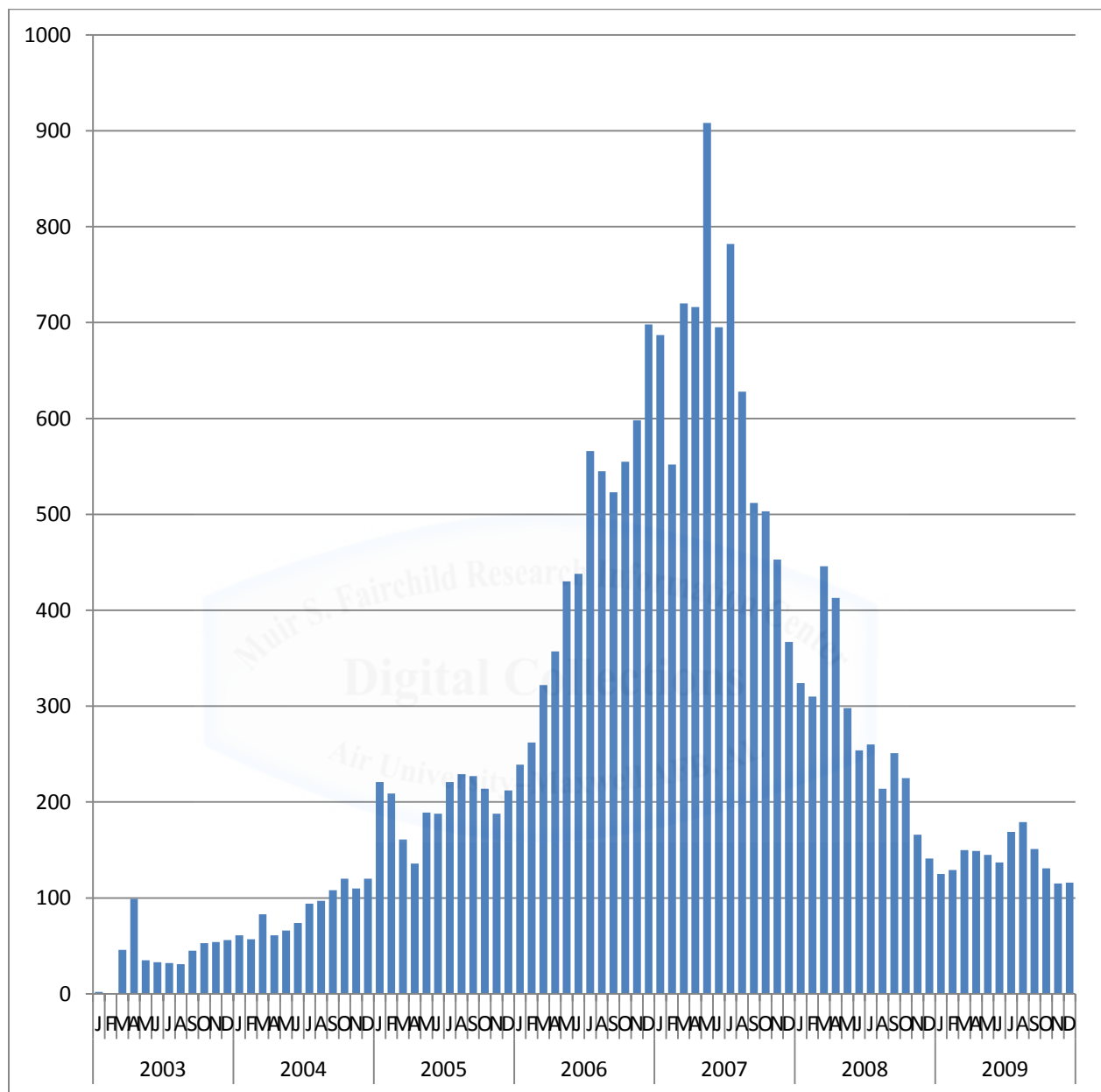


Figure A-2: Civilian Iraqi Deaths (Violent Deaths related to Invasion)

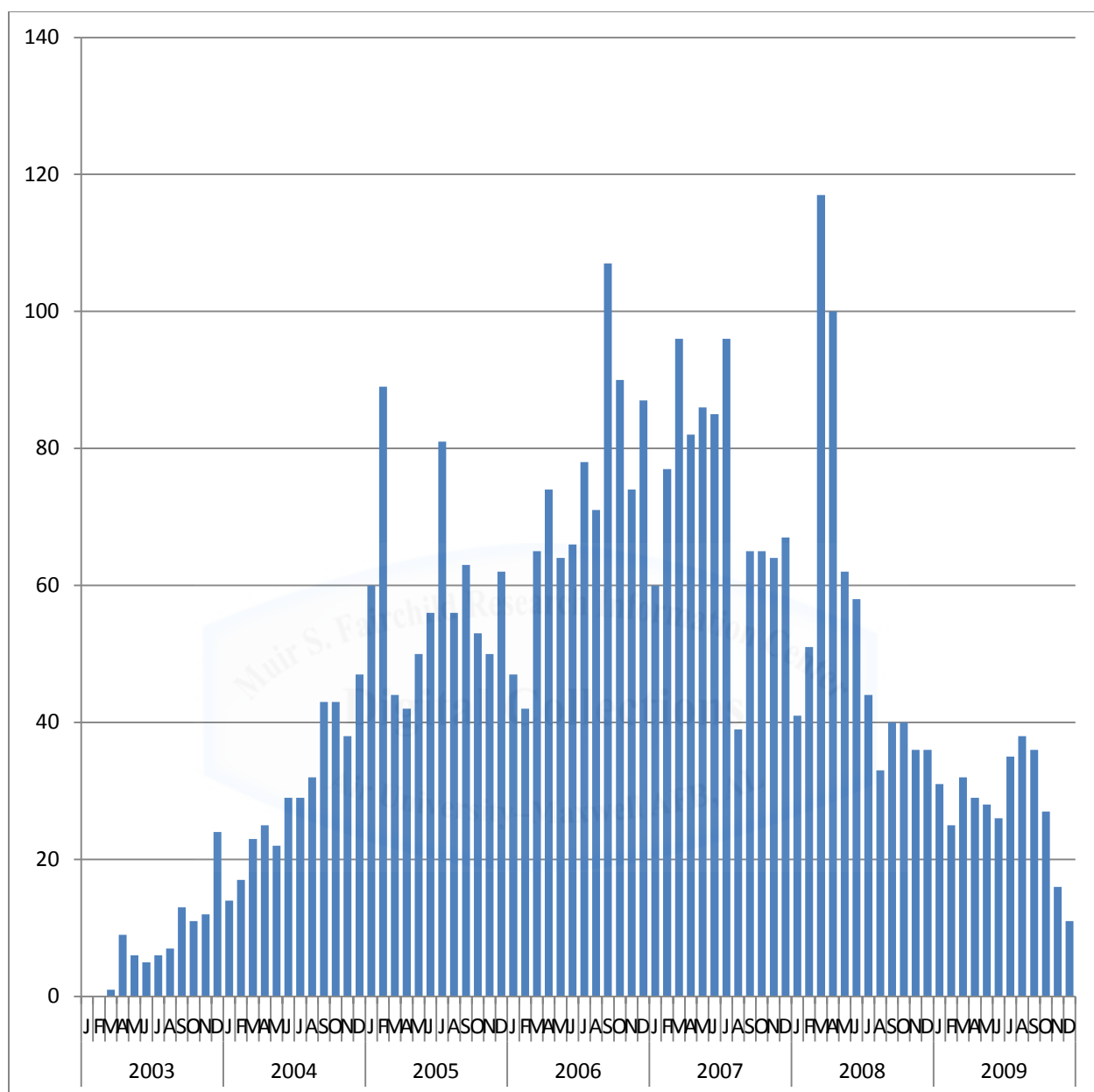


Figure A-3: Civilian Iraqi Deaths caused by “Anti-Occupation” Forces

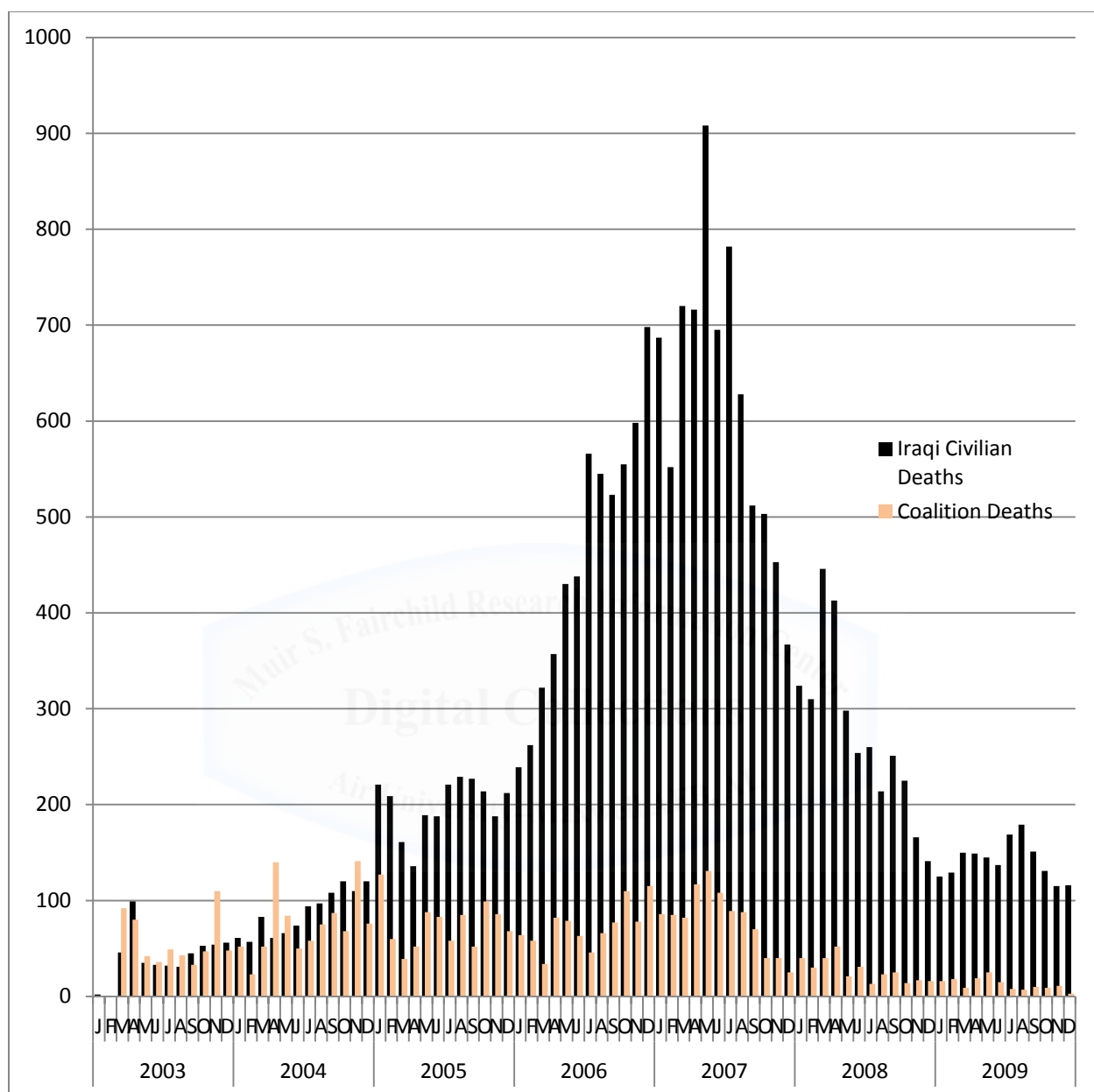


Figure A-4: Civilian Iraqi Deaths and Coalition Deaths

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